



STATE OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

NANNETTE M. BOWLER
DIRECTOR

December 22, 2003

Lansing State Journal
119 W. Lenawee St.
Lansing, Mich. 48913

Dear Letters Editor:

I would like to commend the Lansing State Journal and reporter Tim Martin for the well-researched and balanced series on foster care that appeared December 14-17. Foster care is misunderstood and news media portrayals of the program are often sensational. Martin's series avoided this pitfall and provided a comprehensive view of foster care that shined a light on its complexities.

Each day in Michigan, hundreds of foster parents and staff from the Family Independence Agency and private agencies provide services to nearly 20,000 foster children around the state. These are children whose histories of abuse and neglect deprive them of the loving upbringing most of us take for granted.

Your newspaper also deserves commendation for its December 17 editorial, "For the kids: foster care reform requires cash, patience, diligence". As you succinctly stated, only the people of Michigan can overcome financial, programmatic and political resistance to improve outcomes for foster children in Michigan.

Your balanced and focused stories portrayed some of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision of foster care to Michigan's children and families. We will continue to work with our private agency partners to address those weaknesses and improve services to Michigan's children and families. Again thank you for your objective reporting on this important issue.

Sincerely

Musette A. Michael
Acting Director